



CANAL SITES

When the canal opened to Enfield in 1810, a warehouse was built, providing an interchange with the turnpikes to Manchester and Blackburn. Until the railway opened in 1848, it was the main centre for trade to and from Hyndburn. The warehouse has been extended over the years, the last time around 1910 when the canal was still carrying large volumes of goods.

To improve their service, the canal company took over the warehouse at Church in the 1870s from the Hargreaves brothers who owned Broad Oak Printworks, with further warehousing being provided at Church as late as the 1950s.

The reservoir at Rishton, opened in 1828, supplied water for the canal and has been extended twice. It has always been used for pleasure, with a sailing club using it today.

The canal through East Lancashire was particularly difficult to build. High embankments were the problem. In Hyndburn they can be seen at Altham and three at Church, two used by the Accrington to Blackburn turnpike when it was built in 1826-7.

As far as is known, there was only one boatyard in Hyndburn. It closed around 1870, but stonework close to the swing bridge at Church could be part of the slipway.



MILLS BY THE CANAL AT RISHTON

TEXTILES

Hyndburn's textile workers originally produced cloth from wool and linen, but from the middle of the 18th Century, cotton was to become more important. Two local inventors introduced new machinery;

James Hargreaves from Stanhill produced the Spinning Jenny when he lived in what is now the local Post Office, while John Hacking from Huncoat invented one of the earliest cotton carding engines, a window being dedicated to him in Altham Church.

Both inventions speeded up the production of yarn and were a major influence on changing textiles from a cottage industry to a factory based one.

They significantly increased the amount of cloth being produced and Robert Peel set up his calico printing works at Church to cope with this increase. The Peel family extended their textile interests and were certainly one of the most important influences on the development of the industry. Their print works at Church established Hyndburn as the major centre for textile printing.

Others involved included John Mercer from Great Harwood who developed the 'Mercerisation' of cotton cloth (producing a better finish to the cloth and making it easier to print) as well as several important dyes; the Hargreaves brothers who set up the Broad Oak Printworks; and Frederick Steiner from Alsace who settled here and improved the important 'Turkey Red' dye. It was because of the printworks that a local chemical industry developed whose most important discovery was Terylene, first produced at Broad Oak during the Second World War.

Accrington also became a centre for the production of textile machinery, the firm of Howard & Bullough establishing an international reputation. Originally they made power looms, but later they were better known for preparation and spinning machinery. Most of their export orders were delivered to the docks at Liverpool and Hull by canal from the warehouses at Church.



A TRAIN OF BOATS TOWED BY A STEAMER PASSING BLYTHE'S

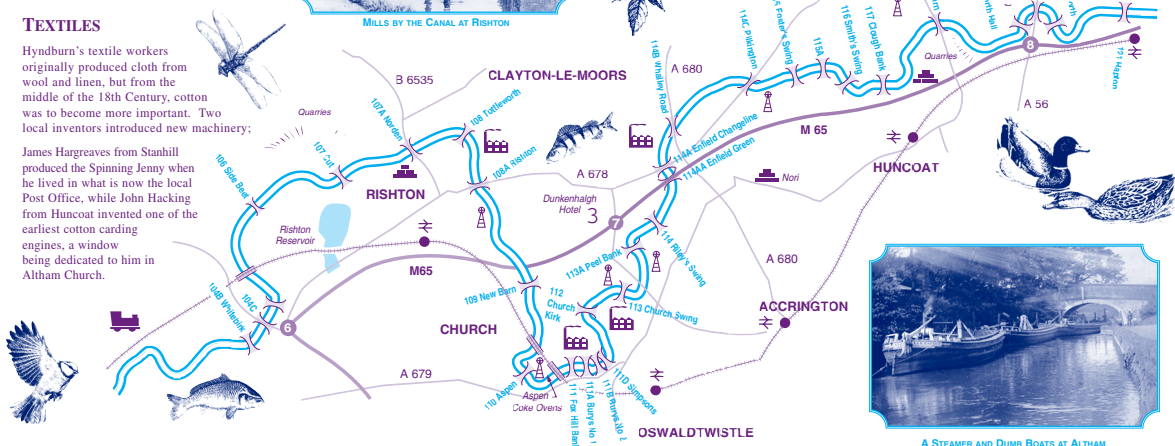


BRICKS AND STONE

Fireclay is often found close to coal seams and when some of the shallow mines ceased to produce coal they became brickworks. Also, during the Ice-Age, the Calder Valley had been filled by 'Lake Accrington', the sediment from the lake forming ideal brick-making material. The best of this clay was used for the world famous Accrington 'NORI' brick with its distinctive bright red colour and high strength, the industry developing towards the end of the nineteenth century.

Until the formation of the brick industry, most local buildings were built from the local stone. Old quarries can be found throughout Hyndburn, the most important candidate one being Norden. The stonework of one of the wharves can still be seen on the edge of the towpath. Many quarries were small, just opened for the construction of a few houses or the canal, and one is just visible at Altham Barn Bridge.

There were several brickworks alongside the canal. George Clarke, whose firebrick works were at Rishton, was an influential local Methodist who established the church in the town. The brickworks at Altham were only in operation for a few years before the First World War, the works developing from small coal mines in the valley below the high, tree covered canal embankment here. Accrington Brick & Tile, the best known local brickworks, did not use the canal, their bricks being transported by rail.



A STEAMER AND DUMB BOATS AT ALTHAM



RISHTON RESERVOIR WAS POPULAR FOR SAILING BUT ITS PRIMARY USE WAS TO TOP UP THE WATER IN THE CANAL

COAL

In Hyndburn, coal seams come to the surface in the Calder Valley around Altham and in the valleys around Beithorn. They were easy to work, and have been mined for centuries. It was the development of the textile industry and the opening of the canal around 1800 which encouraged the development of the coalfield. Several shafts were dug around Altham and these were connected to the canal by tramroads. Others were located around Dunkenhath at Whin Isle and Coppy Clough, with coal being loaded onto canal boats at both. There is an old colliery basin between Rishton and Church, and the remains of a coal-pit served by a tramway from Broadfield Colliery in Oswaldtwistle, is visible at Church. Aspen Colliery is particularly interesting, with the coke ovens and basin still remaining alongside the towpath with the foundations for the winding engines nearby.

Most of these shallow mines were exhausted by the 1920s, and new shafts had been sunk to reach the deeper coal seams. Those alongside the canal were at Rishton and Moorfield. A disaster here in 1883, which killed 64 miners is commemorated by a plaque in Altham Church. Moorfield's best known collier was Eric Morecombe who worked here as a 'Bevan Boy' in the Second World War. The mine closed in 1948, but the coke ovens alongside remained in use until 1962.



The Leeds and Liverpool Canal Co.